

## NOAA VESSEL TIME CHARTER

**HON. DON YOUNG**

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 20, 2005*

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, beginning in Fiscal Year 2001 Congress began providing funds for a vessel time charter for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, to use in addressing the critical hydrographic survey backlog. The vessel time charter added a third method of acquiring the data needed to update and improve the hydrographic charts of our nation's waterways. These charts are essential for our national security, defense and economy. NOAA now uses (1) its own hydrographic survey vessels, (2) data—contracts under the Brooks Act, and (3) a long-term, multi-year, vessel lease/charter of a private sector vessel with contract hydrographers.

The long-term vessel lease/charter, is now completing its first year of operation. I rise today to urge NOAA to reprogram funds to extend the current charter through the end of this calendar year. This extension will allow enough data to be gathered to determine whether the continued use of the time charter is cost effective, and competitive with other methods of acquiring hydrographic data. It will also keep the contract going long enough to determine if fiscal year 2006 funds are available for continued long term vessel charters. To emphasize the bipartisan importance of this issue, I ask that the May 31, 2005, letter to the NOAA Administrator that my good friend and colleague, NORM DICKS signed with me, be entered into the RECORD.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
Washington, DC, May 31, 2005.

Vice Admiral CONRAD C. LAUTENBACHER, Jr.,  
*Undersecretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Herbert Clark Hoover Building, Washington DC.*

DEAR ADMIRAL LAUTENBACHER: As you are aware, the Nation faces a huge backlog of critical hydrographic survey work. To reduce this backlog, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) had developed a three-pronged approach. NOAA is using 1) its own hydrographic survey vessels and personnel; 2) data acquisition contracts; and 3) a leased vessel staffed by contract hydrographers.

In fiscal years 2002 through 2005, Congress provided funding and specific direction to NOAA to enter into a multi-year vessel lease. After a lengthy bid process, the Military Sealift Command entered into a lease on NOAA's behalf that included a base year, and 4 one-year options. The first year of that lease will soon end, and unless it is extended this portion of the hydrographic surveying initiative will end. The bidders, including the winning bidder, based their bids on a 5-year lease period. Therefore, it was very disappointing to learn that NOAA does not intend to exercise even its first annual lease option, especially since NOAA appears to be satisfied with the work that has been done by the leased vessel.

We have requested that the Appropriations Committee include funding to continue the vessel lease program in fiscal year 2006. This will allow NOAA time to acquire and examine cost data on the lease to determine if vessel leasing is a cost effective method of acquiring hydrographic data. While this request is pending, we urge you to extend the

vessel lease with the roughly \$1.6 million remaining of the amounts already appropriated for that purpose. This will hold open the door to allow NOAA to exercise the first annual contract option if Congress appropriates vessel lease funds in Fiscal Year 2006.

Both Congress and NOAA deliberated long and hard before establishing the longterm vessel lease program as an additional method to reduce the survey backlog. Given the time and effort it has taken to get that program under way, it would be very inefficient for NOAA to kill the program this year, and then go through another multi-year contract bidding process starting next year. Therefore, we urge you to use the remaining funds to extend the vessel contract.

Thank you for your expeditious consideration of this request. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

DON YOUNG,  
*Congressman for All  
Alaska.*

NORMAN D. DICKS,  
*Member of Congress.*

CELEBRATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF GARY JOB CORPS IN SAN MARCOS, TEXAS

**HON. HENRY CUELLAR**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 20, 2005*

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Gary Job Corps for 40 years of successful service to the people of San Marcos, Texas.

Located on a campus of 1,000 acres at the former Gary Army Air Field, Gary Job Corps is the largest of 118 Job Corps campuses nationwide, enrolling nearly 2,000 young men and women. It represents the fulfillment of President Johnson's 1964 promise to develop a national job training program for youth, a promise he made while visiting the former Southwest Texas State University.

For 40 years, Gary Job Corps has been helping young men and women achieve their academic and professional dreams. In addition to providing vocational training for careers in the health occupations, business, computers, cooking, and numerous other industries, it has sent on its alumni to the student bodies of Texas State University, Alamo Community College, and other institutions of higher education.

Gary Job Corps has helped countless young Texans achieve their life goals, and has helped bring economic growth, educational achievement, and the promise of a better future to Central Texas. I am happy to have this opportunity to congratulate Gary Job Corps on the occasion of its 40th anniversary, and I wish all of its staff and students many more years of success.

## WORLD REFUGEE DAY

**HON. DONALD M. PAYNE**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 20, 2005*

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on World Refugee Day, to pay tribute to the indomitable spirit and courage of the world's ref-

ugees and internally displaced persons (IDP's), as well as the brave people who help them rebuild their lives. I recognize the generosity of the United States and its assistance to refugees. However, the next year promises to be a unique opportunity for the return of refugees, and in order to seize this opportunity, we must increase our investment in long-term development to make refugee returns durable. I also urge the Bush Administration government to do more to protect current refugees, resolve the conflicts that produce refugees, and prevent future refugee crises.

Among the most vulnerable groups of people in the world are those who are displaced, whether as a result of conflict, persecution or other human rights violations. Often losing everything but hope, refugees and IDP's are among the great survivors of our time. Initially, the fear that refugees and IDP's must overcome may be the immediate one of trying to escape the horrors of war and persecution, the pain of losing homes and loved ones, and the ordeal of flight. Refugees and IDP's deserve our respect—not just for enduring the dangers and violence of the crises that made them refugees—but also for the courage they show in rebuilding their lives and contributing to society in difficult or, unfamiliar circumstances. Albert Einstein, Victor Hugo, Congressman TOM LANTOS, Thabo Mbeki, Marlene Dietrich, and Paul Rusesabagina (of Hotel Rwanda fame) were all refugees whose phenomenal achievements earned the world's respect. Today's refugees are also heroes and deserve no less than our respect.

But giving our respect to refugees and IDP's—truly honoring their courage—requires much more than flattering rhetoric and pledges of solidarity. It requires us to look back at what the world has done well to assist refugees and IDP's. It also requires us to deepen our understanding of the perils and fears they continue to face. In addition, if we truly want to celebrate their courage, it means we must focus our attention on what still needs to be done to help them.

People have fled persecution from the moment in history when they began forming communities. The tradition of offering asylum began at almost the same time. And when nations began to develop an international conscience in the early 20th century, efforts to help refugees also spread across the globe. In 1921, Fridtjof Nansen was appointed as the first refugee High Commissioner of the League of Nations, the forerunner of the United Nations. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) began as a small organization, with a three-year mandate to help resettle millions of European refugees who were still homeless in the aftermath of the Second World War. Since that time, the organization has continually expanded to meet the growing needs of refugees and other displaced people. In more than five decades, the agency has helped an estimated 50 million people restart their lives. Today, a staff of more than 6,000 people in more than 100 countries continues to help some 17 million persons in every corner of the world. Today I commend the outstanding, tireless work of the UNHCR. However, as a former high commissioner said, the fact that the world still finds a need for the UNHCR should serve as a sobering reminder of the international community's continuing failure to prevent prejudice, persecution, poverty and other root causes of conflict and displacement.